

ASSEMBLY BILL 440 – COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCESS ACT

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FACT SHEET

PROBLEM

Currently, the coursework necessary to transfer to the California State University or University of California differ from the classes required to earn an Associate Degree. As a result, many transfer students leave the system having completed the transfer requirements but do not have a degree to show for their work, are unable to participate in community college graduation ceremonies, and are ineligible for certain awards and scholarships.

THIS BILL

The **College Student Success Act** is a proposal to allow individual community college districts to grant an Associate of Arts Degree in Transfer Studies (or in an equivalent program) to eligible students who successfully complete 60 semester units and meet the minimum transfer requirements to a campus of the California State University or University of California.

This proposal will:

- Support student success by providing increased educational opportunities for Californians throughout the state;
- Recognize the achievement of community college students who have successfully completed the rigorous general education coursework on their path to transfer to a four-year university;
- Increase the number of in-state community college students transferring to a four-year university, thereby increasing their earning potential and job marketability for the benefit of California's economy.

BACKGROUND

Since the adoption of the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, preparing students to transfer to a four-year university has been a core function of the community college system. Successful progression from lower-division coursework to degree completion is a basic principle of California higher education and is critical to the future of California's economy.

Today, 1 in 4 jobs require an Associate Degree or higher. In the near future, 1 in 3 new jobs will have such a requirement. The community college system allows the state to address the serious shortage of educated workers. To meet these workforce demands in a cost-effective way, the Transfer Studies Associate Degree provides increased educational opportunities for Californians throughout the state who might not otherwise earn a Bachelor's Degree because of interruptions in their education. This proposal will help reinforce a pathway towards upward economic mobility and encourage students when they are able to continue on at a four-year university.

Several community colleges throughout the state successfully implemented Transfer Studies Associate Degree programs in recent years. However, in 2008 the Board of Governors eliminated these highly effective programs.

Other states such as Oregon and Florida already offer an Associate of Arts in Transfer Studies because the degree program exposes students to a broad spectrum of classes while helping them develop the skills needed to succeed in college and in life.

It is anticipated that there will be minimal cost in implementing this program. Most costs associated with this degree could be absorbed by existing counseling and student services.

Through these difficult fiscal times, increasing student success will have long-term benefits for California's economy. The Transfer Studies Associate Degree is a manageable reform in an otherwise bleak economic climate.

SUPPORT

- Women's Policy Institute, Education Team (Sponsor)
- Campaign for College Opportunity
- CA Postsecondary Education Commission
- Stanislaus County Board of Education
- Gay-Straight Alliance Network

OPPOSITION

- NONE ON FILE